

Lilly Ledbetter and Paycheck Fairness Acts will protect women, continue Halvorson's commitment to equal pay for equal work

(Washington, DC) -

U.S. Representative Debbie Halvorson today voted in favor of H.R. 11, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and H.R. 12, the Paycheck Fairness Act. Both pieces of legislation will help to ensure women receive equal pay for equal work, a topic Halvorson focused on while a member of the Illinois State Senate.

"For a long time, I've worked towards ensuring women receive fair and just compensation in the workplace. It is unfortunate this legislation is necessary even today, but cases like Lilly Ledbetter's are everywhere. I'm proud to have cast two of my first votes in Congress in support of women and in support of equal pay for equal work."

On average, women earn just 78 cents for every dollar earned by a man—a disparity that will cost women anywhere from \$400,000 to \$2 million in lost wages over a lifetime, according to the Institute of Women's Policy Research. In 1963, when the landmark Equal Pay Act was passed, a woman made only 60 cents for every dollar earned by a man. The House of Representatives passed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act in 2007, but the Senate was unable to move the bill. Both bills now go on to the Senate.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is named for a woman who was a clear victim of sex-based pay discrimination while working at Goodyear Tire and Rubber in Alabama. Ledbetter sued Goodyear and won her case, but the Supreme Court ruled she waited too long to file suit. The Supreme Court's decision set the statute of limitations for filing suit to 180 days after the first paycheck was issued. However, if a woman does not find out she is being discriminated against within 180 days of the first pay check, as was the case with Lilly Ledbetter, she has no recourse and could potentially receive unequal pay for the rest of her time at the company. If this bill is passed by the Senate and signed by the President, a woman will be able to file suit for equal pay within 180 days of her last discriminatory paycheck.

"Leveling the playing field is important to me. No woman should have to endure what Lilly Ledbetter went through in pursuit of fair pay. These bills will encourage employers to treat women fairly and to compensate them based on the principal of equal pay for equal work. "

Halvorson said.